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Personal and Confidential

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Berlin
Hotel Continental
Munich, Germany
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Dear Walt,

I've just returned from several days in Berlin and thought you might be interested in some of my impressions.

First, basic Soviet objectives remain unchanged. Minimum: upgrading the DDR by forcing the US to negotiate with it, and by cutting the political (not necessarily, at first, the economic) ties between West Berlin and Bonn. Maximum, toward which the first two are intended to contribute: engendering such disillusionment with and hatred of the "capitulationist" West in the Federal Republic that Moscow will once again have, as it has not since 1941, the chance of playing with German nationalists against Eastern Europe, instead of, as now, only an anti-German policy. Watching the Aug. 13-17 period in West Germany (before Johnson's arrival) as I did, I was very struck by how readily, in spite of all U.S. promises and West German prosperity, the West German press was ready to raise the "stab in the back" cry -- against the U.S. This is only a foretaste, in my view, of what we would have to expect should we make serious concessions on West Berlin: sooner or later, the loss of West Germany to the West.

As to what might be done: in the first place, the Johnson-Clay-1500 GI's was a brilliant stroke -- Gestalt psychology at its best. So is the marching up of U.S. tanks to the sector boundary. Assuming that this attitude is maintained, and that probable post-separate peace treaty interference with air corridor traffic begins, with referral to UN probably impossible to avoid, importance of Belgrade meeting and neutralist attitudes becomes greater. I think both the U.S. and Bonn can do much more than they have in this respect, both in immediate diplomatic and economic pressure and in long-term use of West Berlin as a show-case, not to East Germany of the West, but of Communism and Soviet colonialism to the underdeveloped countries. International meetings, an international university program, large-scale cultural undertakings -- West Berlin itself needs them all and nowhere, cheek-by-jowl to the East Berlin wall around the city, could they be more impressive to Africans and Asians.

One final point: as to the Soviet objective of cutting off ties between Berlin and Bonn, I feel most strongly we must remain adamant. This does not mean, however, that we should allow expellee meetings (Sudetens etc.) in West Berlin, nor that we should remain passive on such issues as the Oder-Neisse line. There will probably come a time, in the inevitable negotiations, where the West Germans might well take the wind out of the Soviet cries of territorial revisionism by offering to recognize the Oder-Neisse line (and perhaps refrain from atomic rearmaments of the Bundeswehr) in return for German reunification or at least self-determination of the BDR.

As ever,

/s/ William E. Griffith